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ABSTRACT

Universalization of primary education (UPE) is one of the major goals of all countries in Asia and the Pacific region. The developing countries, in particular, are engaged extensively in the formulation and implementation of policies, plans, and programs aimed at making adequate and suitable opportunities for primary education available to all children as soon as possible. Lower participation rates of girls in primary education is seen as one of the main obstacles to achieving full universalization of primary education in some of the countries of the region. This volume, one of a series that provides a comparative view of the position of and progress made in UPE in six countries, focuses on China with particular reference to girls' enrollment and participation in primary education. Chapter 1 provides a background history of education in China. Chapter 2 presents proposals for strengthening public education. Chapter 3 describes several case studies of education in various locations throughout China. A summary in chapter 4 concludes the document. Four tables of significant data are provided. (DB)

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Universal Primary Education for Girls

UNESCO
PRINCIPAL REGIONAL OFFICE
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
BANGKOK

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PREFACE

Universalization of primary education (UPE) is one of the major priority goals of all countries in the region of Asia and the Pacific. The developing countries in particular, are now engaged extensively in the formulation and implementation of policies, plans and programmes aimed at making adequate and suitable opportunities for primary education available to all children as soon as possible.

Lower participation rates of girls in primary education is seen to be one of the main obstacles in achieving full universalization of primary education in some of the countries in the region.

In 1985, six member countries of the region were supported within the framework of the Asia and Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID), to prepare national studies focusing on problems and issues related to education of girls, programmes and plans for the promotion of girls education and the innovative measures and actions taken to improve their participation in education. The studies were carried out by national institutes and professional groups under the guidance of high level national steering committees for promotion of girls' education which were established by the Ministries of Education in the respective countries, at the request of UNESCO, ROEAP. A list of the members of the steering committee is given as an Annex.

The findings of the national studies were later reviewed and examined at a Regional Review Meeting on the Situation of Girls' Education in the Context of Universalization of Primary Education which was held in Bangkok in November 1985. This series of publications is an outcome of the collaborative and co-operative efforts of the member countries in understanding the tasks involved in universalizing the primary education of girls and the nature and extent of problems and issues associated with it.

This series provides a comparative view of the position of and progress made in UPE in six countries, with particular reference to girl's enrolment and participation in primary education. It is published with the view that the countries in the region, which have similar problems on education of girls, will find the information, experiences and conclusions useful in pursuing their tasks vigorously by drawing on the experiences of other countries with the same goals and objectives.

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Chapter One

BACKGROUND

As the foundation of the whole education system, primary education plays a fundamental role in raising the scientific and cultural level of the nation. The Chinese government has always paid great attention to the universalization of primary education including education of young girls.

China was for many years a feudal society. From 475 BC to AD 1840. Going through Dynasties of Warring States, Qin, Han, Three Kingdoms, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui, Tang, Five Dynasties, Song, Liao, Jin, Yuan, Ming and Qing, the feudal rule in China lasted more than 2,000 years. In this long, long period, the emperors and their followers adopted a policy of keeping the people in ignorance and forced girls and women to unconditionally obey the feudal ethic code, which imposed on women three obediences and four virtues (obedience to their father before marriage, their husband after marriage, and to their son after the death of their husband; and virtues of morality, proper speech, modest manner and diligent work). The rulers and public opinion would not allow women to have any behaviour contrary to the feudal code; they advocated that women without talents were virtuous women. Under this social condition women could not involve themselves in social activities and had to be confined to household chores and became appendages of their husbands. Women had no right to education at all.

After the Opium War in 1840, China entered into a semi-feudal, semi-colonial society, and women's social status remained the same. A folk song, popular then in China, used these words to describe the women's status: 'The old society is like a 10,000-metres deep well, and at its bottom are the oppressed – we common people; and women are the lowest of the mass'.

The founding of the People's Republic of China ended thousands of years of dark history and brought new life to women, who began, at last, to enjoy equal rights with men.

The first Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultant Conference (CPPCC) passed the Common Programme of CPPCC, the 6th article of which stipulated that 'the People's Republic abolishes the feudal system imposed on women, and women have equal rights as men politically, economically, educationally, culturally, and in all other aspects of social life'. The first session of the National People's Congress passed the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, the 96th article of which stipulated that: 'Chinese women enjoy the same rights as men politically, economically, culturally, socially, and in family life'. It also stipulated that: 'marriage, family, mothers and children are protected by the state'.

In his whole career, Chairman Mao Tsetung, one of the founders of the People's Republic, always paid full attention to the issue of women. After the founding of the Republic, he said that, 'we are now in a different era. Men and women are the same. Women can do what men can'. He highly valued the active role of women in both revolution and economic reconstruction, and likened women to 'half the sky'.

These basic policies of the Chinese government and the high respect and attention paid to women by the leaders opened up a new way to the true emancipation, or rebirth, of Chinese women.

Since 1949 Chinese women have played a great role in socialist construction. In the National People's Congress, the highest state authority, the proportion of woman delegates rose from 12 per cent in 1954 to 21.2 per cent in 1983. In the central government there are now ten women ministers and vice ministers. In provincial governments there are now seven women governors and vice governors. According to the second national census in 1982, the percentage of women workers and staff members was 36.3 per cent, an increase of 28.8 per cent over that in 1949. In the total of 5,296,000 scientific and technological personnel, 1,672,000 or 31.6 per cent are women. Whereas these once used to be only one woman member in the Academic Council of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, by 1981, when the fourth session of the Council was held, there were 14 more female members. In 1984, there were

3,360,000 full-time teachers in primary schools, among whom 2,090,000 or 38.9 per cent were female.

While taking practical measures to safeguard women's equal rights with men in political, economic, social and other aspects, the Chinese government has been paying special attention to the education of women, especially girls. Since 1949 when the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultant Conference was formulated, the Chinese government has always followed a national policy of popularizing primary education among both boys and girls. Since 1976 the universalization of the primary education of boys and girls has been accorded new attention. In December 1980 the Chinese government issued the Decision on Some Issues of the Universalization of Primary Education, in which it was pointed out that:

> . . . education plays a vital role in the modernization process. Our socialist modernization requires not only a highly developed material civilization but also a highly developed spiritual civilization. Without the full development of education and culture, there will be no true socialism.

The Decision also stated that: 'Primary education is the foundation of the whole education system. . . and the raising of the national educational level must proceed from primary schools'. It called on the whole nation 'to strive for basic universalization of primary education in the country in the 1980s'.

In 1982, the 19th article of the new Constitution of the People's Republic of China stipulated that 'compulsory primary education should be universalized'. In his speech at the 12th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, Hu Yao-bang, Secretary-General of the Party, emphasized that universalization of education is an important prerequisite for building a material and spiritual civilization, and that,

> 'while primary education should be basically popularized in the whole country by 1990, the economically and educationally developed areas should accomplish the task earlier than that. Though the popularization of primary education is a tremendous task, it must and can be accomplished through persistant efforts'.

New China has made great achievements in the span of little more than thirty years. According to statistics for 1984, there were 850,000 primary schools, 2.5 times more than the years immediately following liberation. There were 135,570,000 pupils enrolled in primary schools, 3.5 times the number in the early 1950s, and there were over 6 million teachers and staff members in primary schools, seven times more than in the early 1950s. In 1984 there were 106,449,500 school-age children aged 7-11 years, of whom 101,397,100 were enrolled. The overall percentage of school-age children attending schools was 93.4 per cent, and that of girls 93.48 per cent. The annual retention rate was 96 per cent. Now, the network for universalizing primary education extends from the grasslands in nothern Inner Mongolia to the tropical forests in Southern Yunan Province and from the east coast to the Tibetan Highlands in the northwest. A large contingent of primary school teachers has been formed and a solid foundation laid for the universalization of primary education in the whole country.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the general situation and development of girls' education in the universalization of primary education in China from a historical and geographical viewpoint. A highlight of Table 1 is the performance of the mountainous province of Fujian which recorded an overall attendance rate of 94.21 per cent.

Table 1. Enrolment rates of school-age girls in all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, 1984

(in ten thousands)

Areas	Number of 7-11-year-old school-age girls	Number of 7-11-year old girls enroled	attendance rate %	(for rural areas) Number of 7-11-year-old school-age girls	Number of 7-11-year girls enroled	Attendance rate %
National total	5,042.65	4,713.78	93.48	4,298.80	3,962.27	92.17
Beijing Municipality	25.58	25.62	99.1	14.15	13.94	98.5
Tianjin Municipality	25.78	25.60	99.49	15.73	15.59	99.11
Shanghai Municipality	29.27	29.22	99.83	14.39	14.34	99.65
Hebei Province	219.16	212.92	97.20	190.05	183.79	96.20
Jiangsu Province	238.55	232.34	97.40	205.01	198.75	96.49
Zhejiang Province	171.07	165.75	96.89	152.79	147.63	96.62
Shanxi Province	135.66	133.69	98.75	115.07	123.49	98.63
Liaoning Province	158.20	155.90	98.53	112.30	109.90	97.86
Jilin Province	111.09	108.89	98.02	76.88	74.89	97.41
Hubei Province	236.57	230.54	97.45	186.26	180.33	96.82
Hunan Province	274.47	265.41	96.70	241.95	233.13	96.35
Heilongjiang Province	176.15	170.75	96.90	120.90	116.49	96.40
Guangdong Province	277.26	269.32	97.14	242.46	233.35	96.24
Shandong Province	335.24	332.09	96.08	274.44	262.23	95.55
Shanxi Province	138.99	132.29	95.18	115.39	109.25	94.32
Fujian Province	146.85	138.80	94.52	129.15	121.27	93.90
Henan Province	395.93	373.45	94.30	360.41	336.56	93.40
Jiangxi Province	209.19	196.22	93.80	168.82	174.42	93.36
Sichuan Province	569.44	522.81	91.80	527.51	479.23	90.80
Yunnan Province	197.49	171.76	87.00	178.70	153.08	85.60
Anhui Province	257.21	228.08	88.70	230.93	202.19	87.60
Gansu Province	96.30	74.91	77.79	81.59	62.34	76.41
Qinghai Province	25.37	18.81	74.14	18.03	11.98	66.146
Guizhou Province	182.58	128.23	70.20	136.32	110.15	67.40

Table 1. *(continued)*

(in ten thousands)

Areas	*Number of 7-11-year-old school-age girls*	*Number of 7-11-year old girls enroled*	*atten-dance rate %*	*(for rural areas) Number of 7-11-year-old school-age girls*	*Number of 7-11-year girls enroled*	*Atten-dance rate %*
Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region	96.56	90.79	94.00	72.02	66.34	92.10
Guangxi Zhuang Minority Autonomous Regions	198.11	181.30	91.50	179.26	161.92	92.30
Xinjiang Weiwuer Autonomous Regions	78.28	73.13	93.42	61.30	56.10	92.01
Ningxia Hui Minority Autonomous Regions	24.04	20.03	83.30	20.29	16.27	80.20
Xizang* Autonomous Regions	12.04	4.86	40.40	10.36	3.02	29.20

* Note: Figures for Tibet stood for 1983.

Table 2. Percentages of girls in total enrolments in primary schools 1951-1984

(in ten thousands)

Year	*Total enrolment in primary schools*	*Among the totals*	
		Number of girls	*Percentages of the total*
1951	4,315.4	1,206.3	28.0
1952	5,110.0	1,679.6	32.9
1953	5,116.4	1,782.2	34.5
1954	5,121.8	1,707.1	33.3
1955	5,312.6	1,775.8	33.4
1956	6,346.4	2,231.2	35.2
1957	6,427.9	2,215.9	34.5
1958	8,640.0	3,325.7	38.5
1959	9,116.3	3,566.9	39.1
1960	9,379.1	3,665.6	39.1
1961	7,578.6	2,082.5	27.5
1962	6,923.9	2,406.7	34.8
1963	7,152.2	...	...
1964	9,294.5	3,250.5	35.0
1973	13,570.4	5,527.2	40.7
1974	14,481.4	6,330.8	43.7
1975	15,094.1	6,824.3	45.2
1976	15,005.5	6,823.3	45.5
1977	14,617.6	6,632.1	45.4
1978	14,624.0	6,570.4	44.9
1979	14,662.9	6,577.4	44.9
1980	14,627.0	6,517.4	44.6
1981	14,332.8	6,301.2	44.0
1982	13,972.0	6,099.9	43.7
1983	13,578.0	5,937.2	43.7
1984	13,557.12	5,937.72	43.7

Chapter Two

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Table 2. shows that by 1984, 43.7 per cent of primary school students were girls. This compares very favourably with statistics that show women comprise 48 per cent of the total population.

Strengthening public education

The founding of People's Republic of China in 1949 established the social system of the nation, made democratic reforms and realized the principle that men and women are equal. Taking into consideration the large population, vast areas and its unbalanced economic and cultural development, the Chinese government adopted a series measures that were beneficial to the education of girls in the course of popularizing elementary education to raise standards for entry into the work force.

Much attention was paid to the mobilization of ideas and raising people's conciousness for the purpose of attracting the attention of leading members at different ranks to the importance of girls' education; preparing their parents and society to care about girls' education; and arousing girls' interest in being educated.

At the beginning of liberation, public education work was carried out mainly; (a) to disseminate the concept that men and women are equal, and that it is important for women to be liberated in politics, culture and education; (b) to convince women that lack of knowledge would cause them unnecessary suffering; and (c) to call on girls to study at school in order to have the ability to build socialism and be workers with socialist consciousness and culture. At that time a group of young people returned to the countryside to build their home villages after graduation from primary school. Their deeds were prominently disseminated among the masses.

The ten years of upheaval, during the 1960s and 1970s were the years when China felt the effect of a negative influence on girls' education.

Then, until the beginning of the 1980s emphasis was placed on the intimate relationships between education and the four modernizations, emphasizing the role of intelligence investment in developing production, in a diversified economy and in getting rich through labour. The public education of the 1980s has characteristics of our age. Wuqi County, a revolutionary base area in Yenan region, was the first memorial place where the Red Army arrived after the Long March in 1935. However its economic basis was weak and the development of education was slow. In recent years the local government has realized that it should grasp education well and grasp it from primary school so that the educational face of Wuqi County can be changed.

In 1983, the government of the Wuqi County made a decision on 'strengthening education work', energetically disseminating strategical roles of education in the drive for modernization. Many pamphlets on education were printed and handed out to the cadres during one week in March and another in October every year. These cadres took the lead in making the contents known to every household.

They also organized all the efforts to mobilize the school-age children, particularly girls, to attend primary school. Thus the attendance rate in the whole country has risen to 95.4 per cent. Several anecdotes relating to the success of this programme were widely disseminated, including the one about a man beyond 60 who managed to send his granddaughter to primary school to study every day after learning of the importance of education. Another peasant helped his village to build a school with the money he had kept to buy donkeys. Many similiar examples could be seen in the vast countryside of China.

Issuing rules for compulsory education. In 1984, the second meeting of the sixth National People's conference of Jiangsu Province discussed and adopted 'Contemporary Rules of Popularization of Elementary Compulsory Education'. It stipulated that children of age 6 or 7, regardless of sex and nationality must attend school on

time. In 1984, many other provinces such as Fujian, Anhui, and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region published rules similiar to this.

In order to assure that the girls could attend school on time, they wrote into the rules that: 'Those parents who prevent the girls of school age from going to school are guilty of tyrannizing women and children'. These rules were based on the fact that part of the districts in the province were under the influence of 'the feudal idea of regarding men as superior to women'. Some parents had been preventing the young girls from going to school, so the rate of girls' attendance was so low that it became an obstacle to popularization of elementary school.

In order to carry out the rules, the Educational Department and the Women's Federation of Fujian Province sent out a notice which stated:

1. The administrative Department of Education at different levels and the Women's Federation must co-operate very well in deepening the propaganda and popularization of elementary education's great significance in order to enable the cadres and masses to know that it is their responsibility to send their sons and daughters to schools. It also stresses the need to get rid of the feudal idea of regarding men as superior to women and defend the rights of girls to receive education.

2. The Department of Education at different levels and the Women's Federation must regard the assurance of girls' education as an important matter of defending their rights and educate those who prevent girls of school age from attending local government schools.

3. The department of education at different levels must exercise the running of schools in all ways. In those places in which the economic condition is good the girls can receive elementary education free of charge.

4. The Department of Education at different levels must sum up the experience of mobilizing the girls attending schools conscientiously and organize a comparative evaluation.

In 1984 the local government of Zuoyun County, Shanxi Province, published 'The decision on implementing free elementary volunteer education', thus setting a good example for the whole country. Investigations showed that the production in industry and in agriculture has developed rapidly in this country in recent years. Between 1980 and 1984 the total output value more than doubled. The province has also encouraged entry and retention through the provision of free textbooks.

Cadres and masses in other rural areas in Southern and Northern China have realized the urgency and necessity to send their children to school. They have also made some decisions, praising those who are active in sending their children to schools, criticizing those who are not. Such roles and decisions play an important role in popularizing elementary education and prompting the children of school age to go to school, so that girls' education could be assured.

Popularizing education and promoting the enrolment of girls. The former Ministry of Education published 'Preliminary rules on the basic demands of populizing elementary education'. It indicates: 'The popularization of elementary education demands that all the children of school age could enter schools and keep on learning till they finished their periods of schooling and graduate. At that time, considering the difference of the development of economy and culture and natural condition in different parts, the rules demanded that:

a) the rate of enrolment into schools should reach more than 95 per cent.

b) the retention of students in school should be more than 97 per cent.

c) the rate of graduation should be more than 95 per cent urban students, 90 per cent for the rural areas which have good conditions, and 80 per cent for the other areas.

d) among the young children aged between 12-15, the rate of popularization of elementary education should be more than 95 per cent.

Provincial autonomous regions and municipalities directed by the Central Government adopt the following measures to assure that both the boys and girls of school age enter school:

Each primary school must file documents related to the popularization of education, including the 'Records of education of every household' and the 'List of names of 0-6-year pre-school-age children'. They must also establish a system of responsibility for the popularization of education in towns and village. The responsibility of towns is to:

a) strengthen leadership for the popularization programme including carrying out regular checks and giving support to schools;

b) disseminate information about the significance of popularizing primary schools and educate the broad masses and cadres to fulfil their obligations including assuring the safty of school property;

c) carry out the policies consciously, care about the teachers' lives, support them in their work and promote their respect in society;

d) refuse employment to children who have received no elementary education; and

e) provide funds for elementary schools to appraise and buy instruments and facilities for teaching.

The responsibility of villages is to:

a) run their schools through committees comprising village cadres, youth, women, activists and school leaders;

b) incorporate the popularization of elementary schools in the regulations and rules of the village and educate the masses to respect the teachers, love their schools and support the work of schools in all ways;

c) educate and support parents to send their children to school and fulfil their obligations by applying economical sanctions against those who prevent their children from going to school and giving financial help to those children who need it; and

d) provide funds for building schools and improving their condition.

The responsibility of parents is to ensure that:

a) children who are at the age of seven and have no physical defect are sent to school;

b) their children complete their primary school courses; and

c) they co-operate with the school in doing educational work for the students by helping them fulfil their study.

Before the entrance of students every year, principals and teachers are responsible for making investigations into the children of school age and should organize their entry into schools.

Principals and teachers should do their work well to keep the students at school. Teachers should show fondness for their students and manage to teach well by arousing the students' interests in learning. They should provide economic assistance to those who lack money and organize those who have some difficulties in attending schools to learn in other ways. Teachers should also serve all the students and adopt measures to help those who have lagged behind.

Three types of primary school provide for the needs of girls from cities, rural areas, mountain regions, pastoral areas and regional networks of waterways, of different nationalities and economic backgrounds. The central primary schools in the cities and rural areas (town and county, village), carry out teaching plans made by the Ministry of Education as full-time schools and offer complete courses. Village schools offer Chinese, mathematics, general knowledge and ideology and behaviour subjects. The teaching plan is made by the administration department of education in the province. There are also part-time and other forms of primary schools, making up the third alternative offered. Such schools offer only two subjects: Chinese and mathematics and there are only one or two teachers. The teaching plan and this teaching materials are prepared by the province. These various types of schools satisfy most needs.

Chapter Three

CASE STUDIES

Mingli town of Yuan Jiang County, Yunan Province, is located in the mountain areas of Ailao. More than 80 per cent of the population of 12,590 belong to a minority race, the Mani. Being restricted by the natural conditions and the scattered distribution of the villagers, the irrational location of schools, and the number of single teacher schools, the rate attendance was very low. Only half of the girls went to school. They would be kept at home to look after the cattle and do domestic work. Now they run schools in various forms. There are 24 night schools and 29 morning and evening classes with 1,010 pupils of whom 70 per cent are female. In some village night schools, more than 90 per cent are girls. The new entrant rate rose to 84.13 per cent. Students at night schools have two periods of classes every evening. They spend five nights in studying Chinese and mathematics and one night in singing and playing. They do domestic work and homework by day. At night they go to school. Those who ask to transfer to full-time schools are given help.

Liufu County of Jianhe County, Kuizhou Province is a region of Miao nationalities. Both the economy and culture there were backward. Only a few girls attended schools. In 1982, they ran their first part-time primary schools for girls. Under the influence of this town, the whole county has established more than 70 primary schools similar to this school.

Lechang County of Kwangtung Province is located among the mountains of Nanling in north Guangdong. There are more than 160,000 people living in the region of calcareous sandstone. Because of the bad natural conditions, economic and cultural development was very slow. In 1981, the new school entrant rate was only 72.5 per cent. Among the 2,400 new entrants there were only 185 girls or 8 per cent of the total. Among the 45 first-year classes, 16 were without young girls. In 1982, the Department of Education of Lechang County investigated the elementary education of this

region. They found it necessary to run schools in various forms in order to suit the needs of the local masses for production and life. They established full-time schools at the central village; setting the place of teaching at those villages with more than 15 children of school age and making a circuit to give lessons to those who had some difficulty in going to the full-time schools. Thus there were 23 teaching places, 178 part-time classes and 28 circuit classes. The number of girls increased to 8,587, more than three times as many as in 1981.

The Congwu township in Huian County of Fujian Province is a fishing area, where there is high mobility among the fishermen and relatively few girls were enrolled in school. In 1982 the township set up 43 girls' classes, which enrolled 1,400 girls, increasing the enrolment rate for school-age children from 75 per cent to 95.1 per cent and setting the retention rate at 99 per cent.

In recent years there have been more and more children of workers and farmers getting school fee waivers, and in Innier Mongolia, Tibet, Qinghai, and Xingjiang, where there are many minorities, the state has been providing tuition and textbook fees for most pupils, and providing stipends for pupils who have finencial difficulty. In areas populated by the Han nationality, those primary schools which are located in economically developed areas or which have good returns from work-study programmes have waived tuition and other fees for all pupils. The tuition and pupil fees charged by Chinese primary schools are quite small, which, in common folk's words are 'less than the the money spent for buying a hen'. Despite this small amount of expenditure, the tuition and pupil fees are still a barrier to some families in financial difficulties or multichildren families. In view of this, the waiving of tuition and pupil fees to all will be a positive encouragement to girls as well as boys in attending schools.

Madu County in Guoro Tibetan Autonomous Area in Qinghai Province is a sparsely populated pastoral area at the upper end of the Yellow River, 4,500 metres above sea level. The average annual temperature is -5° C, with a low of below -53° C. The atmosphere is rarefied with only 50 per cent of the oxygen found at sealevel. In 1983 only 60 per cent of shepherds' children were enrolled in schools. Despite the great difficulties in running education in such a

low-temperature area, the local government is fully aware that without education there can be no change in its backwardness. In recent years the county government has set up seven boarding primary schools. It has not only waived tuition and school fees for every pupil but also provided each pupil with a 16 yuan monthly stipend and given each pupil clothing, a quilt, and a blanket. The authority also granted grasslands to the schools and 420 oxen and 3,364 sheep for pupils' food. These seven schools now have an enrolment of 500, half of whom are girls.

Zhiho County in Guizhou Province is a remote area which is populated by the Han Miao, and Tujia. Transportation in the County is very difficult and the economy and education very backward. Eight townships of the county are mountainous. In 1983 these eight townships had 1,780 school-age girls, of whom only 341, or 19 per cent, were enrolled in schools. In 1984 the County Party Committee held and educational meeting for promoting primary education and decided to waive tuition and school fees for all girls in grades I to III and to improve the working conditions of the teachers. Thereby the enrolment rate of girls has been greatly increased.

In the Tongxing County in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region the Hui population has a long tradition of betrothing girls at the age of 7-8 years. Consequently their school attendance rate was quite low. In 1980, 15 primary schools were set up for Hui children. The Hui pupils had their tuition and school fees waived and were given a monthly stipend of 7 yuan. Since 1981 all pupils in the County have had their tuition and school fees waived. In 1984, all girl pupils in grades IV-V were given a 5 yuan monthly stipend as an encouragement to complete primary education. Moreover rural families which had more than three children enrolled in school were given 15 yuan every month to help them buy learning materials.

In order to prevent girls from remaining illiterate, some rural areas, such as Huashan Village in Guangyintang Township, Qiyang County, Hunan Province, have sponsored 'Girls' School-attending Award' since 1979, with funds collected from the income of rural industry and side-line production. Largely owing to this Award, 100 per cent of the girls and boys in the village have been enrolled in schools.

The foregoing examples show that though there are various factors influencing girls' enrolment rate, the problem in girls' enrolment may be gradually improved and greater progress made so long as people's governments and education authorities at all levels make rational policies and take various active measures which suit the specific conditions in the region or area.

Growth and development. At present a course in moral education is offered in all Chinese primary schools, and social moral education is carried out through instruction in Chinese language and literature, history, arts and extracurricular activities. Children are taught in a lively, practical way to be polite and civilized and to pay attention to hygiene, social order and discipline and public environment. They are encouraged to love their motherland, the people, labour, science, and socialism; they are trained in fine manners, speech, and behaviour. Much care is taken to see that children develop good moral qualities and habits from their early years, qualities such as hard work, thrift, efficiency, attention to the saving of energy, keeping time, a good sense of equality for all in seeking truth, and capability of self management and helping the family and others. A collaboration is encouraged between education by the family and by society and school education.

The Chinese Government and its leaders pay full attention to the healthy growth of children. Praise for their heroic deeds, encourages children and orients them to develop noble qualities of serving the interests of the people of China and the whole world.

Improving the quality of education. The 'Teaching programme for Chinese full-time primary schools', stipulates that primary schools offer courses in ideological and moral education, the Chinese language, math, a foreign language, fundamentals of nature, fundamentals of history, fundamentals of geography, physical education, music, singing and play, fine arts, and physical labour. The Programme stresses the need to improve methods of teaching and testing, to reduce the pupils' homework load, and to improve the quality of teaching. At the same time the Programme requires that schools strengthen the teaching of fundamentals, pay more attention to the development of pupils' abilities, and enable the pupils to learn advanced scientific knowledge at an earlier age.

Universal primary education for girls

Surveys have found that Chinese girls, whether in urban or rural areas, study hard and observe discipline, and that their achievements are not lower than boys'. The results of one of these studies are outlined in Table 3.

It can be seen that Chinese girl pupils receive the same teaching as boys and their school performance shown through test scores are as good, or even better in some areas, than boys'.

Physical growth. The Chinese government and educational authorities pay special attention to the physiological characteristics of girls, especially girls in upper grades in primary schools. In the Preliminary Regulations for Primary Schools, formulated by the former Ministry of Education in the early 1960s and revised in 1978, it was stipulated that female teachers be appointed as counsellors for girls in matters of girls' health in their puberty years. In 1979 the former Education Ministry and the State Commission for Physical Education issued 'Preliminary regulations of physical education in secondary and primary schools', which stated that courses in physical education of girls should be offered by female teachers and the classes should correspond to girls' physiological characteristics and should not treat young girls as adults. Also in 1979 the Education Ministry and the Health Ministry jointy issued the Preliminary regulations of health work in secondary and primary schools (draft)', which pointed out that girls should not participate in violent physical activities and unsuitable physical labour during menstruation. Owing to the attention and efforts by the Chinese government and relevant authorities in strengthening girls' health, the conditions for Chinese girls' healthy growth have been gradually improved.

As regards social education, the Chinese government, the National Women's Union, and the Communist Youth League, in order to specify the good qualities they are advocating and stressing and to set good examples for girls to follow, often publicize the deeds of heroines model woman workers, woman teachers, and especially the well-known disabled girl, Zhang Hai-dai, and members of the Chinese Woman's Volleyball Team, who success-fully won the World champion three times in succession.

Table 3. Pupil scores in County-wide Standard Test Zhouyang Central Primary School, Gaomi County, Shandong Province, Feb. 5, 1985*

	Number of Students				*Test Scores*					
		among whom			*among which*					
	Total	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Average of all student scores in Chinese & Math*	*Average Scores for Girls*			*Average Scores for Boys*		
					Math and Chinese	*Chinese*	*Math*	*Math and Chinese*	*Chinese*	*Math*
I	64	33	31	97.94	98.15	98.8	97.5	97.72	97.19	98.25
II	69	27	42	93.99	94	92.7	95.3	93.99	95	92.88
III	86	35	51	87.46	87.55	77.3	97.8	87.4	76.6	98.2
IV	90	46	44	76.4	78.5	72.88	84.12	74.24	66.3	82.18
V	98	38	60	85.3	87.98	80.4	95.55	83.63	76	91.25
Total	1,407	179	228	88.2	89.24	84.42	94.05	87.39	82.21	92.55

* 1. This school is in a rural area and its quality of teaching is ranked in the county as upper middle-level.

2. The tests are county-wide standardized, with the item set by the County Teaching Research Group.

3. Scores are on a 100-mark system.

Table 4. Status of physical growth of girls in urban and rural areas[1]

Item	*Year*	*7-yr old*	*8-yr old*	*9-yr old*	*10-yr old*	*11-yr old*
height (in mm)	1979	120.4	125.0	130.1	135.6	141.2
	1975	119.3	124.6	129.5	134.8	140.6
	change	+ 1.1	+ 0.4	+ 0.6	+ 0.8	+ 0.6
weight (in kg)	1979	20.6	22.5	24.9	27.8	31.0
	1975	20.4	22.4	24.6	27.1	30.5
	change	+ 0.2	+ 0.1	+ 0.3	+ 0.7	+ 0.5
	1979	66.3	68.2	70.4	72.9	75.5
	1975	65.8	68.0	70.2	72.5	75.3
	change	+ 0.5	+ 0.2	+ 0.2	+ 0.4	+ 0.2
chest measurement (in mm)	1979	55.8	57.4	59.3	61.6	64.1
	1975	55.3	57.1	58.6	60.7	63.5
	change	+ 0.3	+ 0.3	+ 0.7	+ 0.9	+ 0.6

[1] Above results obtained through a survey of 200,000 girls in 16 provinces and cities.

Chapter Four

SUMMARY

Despite the great efforts made by the Chinese government in developing girls' education, there are still problems and difficulties in this respect because of the vast territory, the many nationalities, and the relative underdevelopment of the country as a whole.

First of all there is the influence of the economic development level on girls' education. It can be seen from Table 1 that in economically developed municipalities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin, the attendance rates of girls in 1984 were all over 99 per cent and the rates for economically relatively developed provinces on the southeastern coastline, like Jiangsu and Grangdong, were mostly over 95 per cent. The rates for economically underdeveloped provinces in the Southwest and Northwest regions like Tibet, Qinhai in 1984 were all below 90 per cent. Problems are even greater for areas where minorities are situated. For example, the average attendance rate for girls in Ning-xia Hui Minority Autonomous Region in 1984 was 83.3 per cent while the rate for those in mountainous and pastoral areas in the same Region was only 63.9 per cent. In the Bama Yao-Minority Autonomous County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region there are 843 primary schools/centers, 38 of which have no girls, and the percentage of girls in the total primary school enrolment is only 30.5 per cent. In addition to economic and cultural conditions, national customs and religious influences also count for the relatively low enrolment rate in these areas.

Secondly, there is the influence of feudal ideology of regarding men as superior to women. In 1984 the national enrolment rate for boys was 97 per cent while that for girls was only 93.48 per cent. One major cause for this difference is the lingering influence of that feudal idea on the part of some parents, especially in rural areas. This kind of attitude influences not only some minority nationalities but also some remote Han-nationality-populated areas. Though

efforts have been made for many years to solve this problem, it has not been solved nationally.

Taking into consideration the foregoing problem, the Chinese government has shifted its priority in the universalization of primary education to rural areas – especially areas liberated early in the revolutionary years, mountainous areas, economically poor areas, and minority-populated areas. Since 1983 the State Council has granted a total of 150,000,000 yuan to these areas to assist in development of school buildings and instructional instruments. In December 1984 the Chinese government sponsored a national meeting in Yantai City of Shandong Province to exchange experiences in universalizing primary education. The Final Report of the meeting stressed that

> . . . special attention be paid to the issue of girls enrolment. As regards the lower enrolment rate of girls than that of boys, educational authorities should collaborate with other social institutions and organizations like the Women's Union in analyzing the various causes of the problem and taking relevant measures for strengthening ideological education and increasing financial support.

In March 1985, a Report by the National Women's Union to the State Council stressed again the issue of girls' school enrolment. The Report pointed out:

> The relatively low enrolment rate of girls in rural areas might result in many female illiterates in a few years. To solve this problem, in addition to ideological work to girls' parents, governments should formulate relevant legislation and regulations to protect the legal rights of girls in receiving education.

The Report has been approved and disseminated to all provinces and regions for implementation.

In May 1985 the Central Committee of the CCP issued the 'Resolution concerning educational system reforms', which stated that the power to develop basic (primary and secondary) education should be delegated to local authorities and 9-year compulsory education implemented in steps. Because of the vast teritory and uneven economic and cultural development, primary education

would be universalized in stages and in accordance with different conditions of different areas.

Firstly, for cities, economically developed areas in coast-line provinces and some developed inland areas, which account for one quarter of the total population, junior high school education has been popularized in some and the rest should popularize junior high school education in both quality and quantity by the year 1990.

Secondly, in average-level townships and rural areas which account for half the total national population, primary education should be first popularized, and preparations made for universalizing general junior high school education or vocation/technical education at the same level by the year 1995.

Thirdly, in economically backward areas, which account for one quarter of the total population, efforts should be made to develop different forms and levels of basic education, and the state should provide as much financial support as possible to educational development in these areas.

At present the State Commission is drafting the 'Compulsory education act of the People's Republic of China', which will be revised on the basis of suggestions from various circles and then submitted to the National People's Congress for Approval and effecting. In this way the girls' rights to education will be further protected by law on a nation-wide basis.

Annex

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Li Zhonghan
Deputy Director
Department of Primary Education
Ministry of Education

Hu Shuzhi
Member of China International Educational Council
Ministry of Education

Xu Jinyuan
Deputy Director
Programme Planning Division
The Secretariat of Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

Sai Meifang
Director
Division of Nationalities' Education
Educational Bureau of Yunnan Province

Yan Chenzhong
Deputy Director
Division of Primary Education
Educational Bureau of Fujian Province

Jiang Yunjou
Programme Officer
Division of Primary Education
Department of Primary Education
Ministry of Education

SELECTED APEID PUBLICATIONS
RELATING TO UNIVERSALIZATION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

* *Education of disadvantaged groups and multiple class teaching; studies and innovative approaches; report. 1981*

Multiple class teaching and education of disadvantaged groups; national studies: India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Republic of Korea. 1982

Learning needs and problems in primary education; report. 1983. (2 vols.)

Training of educational personnel for integrated curriculum; report. 1984

Towards universalization of primary education in Asia and the Pacific; country studies (of 12 countries) and a regional overview. 1984

Mutual co-operation for schools development; some experiences from Asia and the Pacific; report. 1985

Grass roots networking for primary education; case studies: Thailand, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Japan. 1985

Towards equality of educational opportunity; inter-country exchange of experiences; report of the visits of the Panel on the Education of Girls. 1985

Formal and non-formal education: co-ordination and complementarity; report. 1986

Education of girls in Asia and the Pacific; report. 1986

Raising the achievement level of children in primary education; report. 1986

In-service training and tomorrow's primary education; report. 1987

Coping with drop-out; a handbook. 1987

Education in difficult contexts; report. 1987

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* Out of stock

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